

Santa Barbara City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness and Community Relations  
November 13, 2008  
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

David Gebhard Public Meeting Room  
630 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
Minutes

Staff Present: Frank Mannix, Sue Gray, Steve Wiley, Dave Gustafson, Don Olson

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Marin commented on the increasing vilification of homeless persons and he puts partial blame on civic authorities. He stated that there was a lot of rage and hate after Councilmember Das Williams posted a piece on Newshawk and he asked that Council try to quiet down the negative talk.

Nancy McCradie stated that a friend of hers lost a window in her RV due to the recent negative articles. She abhors the negative hate campaign and hopes it goes away.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 22, 2008

The minutes were approved as submitted (M-Francisco/S-Schneider).

3. PRESENTATION OF ROUGH DRAFT DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIES TO  
ADDRESS COMMUNITY ISSUES RELATED TO HOMELESSNESS IN THE  
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

Chair Falcone introduced this item by stating that the agenda includes a presentation of the rough draft, initial input from the public and an initial response from the subcommittee members. She urged people to take the draft with them, think about the possible strategies and come to the next meeting (December 18<sup>th</sup>) with concrete suggestions not only on what they would like the City to do, but also with ways they can contribute to the process. She said that there would be a final meeting in January for the subcommittee to decide on the recommendations that will be presented to the full Council.

Sue Gray, Community Development Department, and Captain Frank Mannix, S.B. Police Department, presented the rough draft of possible strategies to address the issues discussed by the subcommittee during the past several months. The draft is available on the subcommittee's website at

[http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Government/Other\\_Committees/Homelessness and Community Relations/](http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Government/Other_Committees/Homelessness_and_Community_Relations/). Staff explained that the draft document includes a summary of the subcommittee and task group meetings that have been held and a list of potential recommendations for discussion. It is a working document that will likely change during the course of the next few subcommittee meetings.

#### 4. COMMUNITY INPUT ON DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

**The public was asked to comment first on the Enforcement strategy section: Recommendation #1: Adoption of a City ordinance that is more restrictive on solicitation. Recommendation #2: Continue and expand intergovernmental cooperation to curb negative behavior. Recommendation #3: Continue to utilize Police Department deployment strategies to best meet the immediate demands of the community.**

Gary Linker, New Beginnings Counseling Center, stated that he felt the three strategy areas should be: Policies, Enforcement and Services. He said that the Milpas Action Task Force is not looking for an Alcohol Impact Zone; they are specifically looking for 1) a consistent proactive police presence, 2) a change in the terms of probation and parole, 3) the City to inform the State Alcohol Beverage Control of establishments who sell to inebriates, and 4) Council establish a CUP process requiring businesses who wish to sell alcoholic beverages to abide by certain conditions. None of these were listed as potential recommendations. He also stressed the importance of having enough outreach workers and commented that community-based organizations can hire 3 full-time outreach workers for each retired part-time police officer that may be hired. He had concern about the recommendations encouraging agencies to apply for City and County CDBG funding as those funds are limited. He felt they should be encouraged to make their case to private foundations and governmental jurisdictions.

Mike Foley, Casa Esperanza, stated that the draft was a great starting point, however there are a couple items that are not in the report that should be: 1) probation and parole stay orders (he handed the subcommittee a copy of a stay order in Los Angeles Skid Row/5<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor), 2) conditional use permit to control the sale of alcohol on Milpas Street where there are currently 31 liquor licenses (if an establishment violates ABC codes they can be forced to abide by the CUP even though they may have been grandfathered in), 3) the need for measurable outcomes (i.e. how many panhandlers and street sleepers are there currently and the goal is to reduce them to what number).

Roger Heroux, Bringing Our Community Home, stated that the document reflects what has happened in the past six meetings. He also stated that he agreed with many of Dr. Linker's statements. He said that the 10-Year Plan wants to continue working with the Police Department and outreach teams. He said that there needs to be balance in the approach taken so that the focus is not just on enforcement. He also reinforced that it would cost the same to hire 3 outreach workers as it would to hire 1 police officer. He said that the County has to be involved to assist with some of these issues. He suggested that a letter be sent to the Board of Supervisors and County Administration regarding the activities taking place and urging them to tell their committees and commissions that this is a priority. He also stated that County Alcohol Drug and Mental Health is the largest department in the County and they need to know that detox is a priority on the South Coast.

Peter Marin stated that disabled people must be allowed to sit on a bench and hold up signs. He also stated that soliciting is a constitutional right and suggested the subcommittee get input from free speech attorneys. He said the recommendations seem hysterical and are overkill and all the ameliorations and remedies cost money we don't have; the easy things to achieve are the punitive measures. He also stated that the subcommittee should be focused on housing first measures and removing people from the streets. He said he did not see this in the recommendations. Enforcement measures will result in a cost to the Public Defender's Office and it costs to put people in jail. He stated that most homeless who are prosecuted as misdemeanors get off with the help of local attorneys. He said the draft was a start, but it is immensely incomplete.

John Buttny, Bringing Our Community Home, stated that we need to add the Courts to the partner list. He said he did some panhandling research online and found that successful panhandling campaigns included outreach programs. He reiterated that for the cost of 1 part-time police officer, 3 full-time outreach workers could be hired and they could expand their services in the downtown area. He also spoke of the need to connect outreach on the street to services in the area, and suggested building on Casa Esperanza's success in getting people off the street with their outreach workers. He stated that we should use the 100 empty beds at Casa Esperanza to get that many people off the street. He said that what is needed is a comprehensive strategy for improving our community's response to people with mental illness.

Linda Miller, Homes on Wheels, said that there are alcohol issues in Santa Barbara in both the homeless and upper echelons and that people will get alcohol by whatever means they can. She also stated that the best outreach is from people who are dealing or have dealt with the same issues. She also feels there is a publicity problem indicated by the recent derogatory remarks.

Nancy McCradie commented that she didn't see a tightening up of the shelters communication with one another as a recommendation and she feels that there is a need for more tracking of people who fail in the recovery process.

Melody stated that homeless persons sitting on benches need to give up their seat to others like pregnant women, disabled and elderly.

Ruth Wilson stated that she appreciated the organizational work that's gone on. She feels the answer needs to be on the grassroots level; one that doesn't cost money. She said that the houseless persons she works with respond to being treated as individuals with respect and we can't use a cookie cutter approach. She said that people should have the freedom to sleep on the street and/or die of alcoholism. It's expensive to pick people up and take them to jail and the answer is something else at the grassroots level. She feels there needs to be options for people woken up in the middle of the night with no where to go. She said that Portland gave the homeless a vacant lot to build shelters on.

Peter Neuhaus said that he sees a differentiation between Santa Barbara homeless who definitely need help and transients and the document should make the distinction. He would like to see how we can discourage transients from coming here.

**There were no public comments specifically on Recommendation #4: Encourage coordination and cooperation of street outreach teams and the Police Department to work with those on the Top 100 open container offender list.**

**Public comments on Recommendation #5: Amendment of Casa Esperanza's conditional use permit to allow for an increase in their year round beds for vulnerable populations.**

Nancy McCradie stated that it's a good idea.

John Dixon, Tri-County Produce, stated that an increase in year round beds is a big concern because there are still problems in the neighborhood. The CUP has already been amended to increase the beds from 30 to 100 year round. He said that it's hard to see 100 empty beds, but the impact on the neighborhood is a big concern. He's not sure what category of residents would work but it needs careful thought. He also stated that developing a Recovery Zone Area that limits the alcohol sales would just result in the use of other forms of alcohol. He stated that the problem of homelessness would not be solved even if the community threw \$2 - \$3 million at the problem.

Peter Marin said that the homeless problem is not just in Santa Barbara and that 1.5 – 2% of the general population is homeless in all communities and it's no higher in Santa Barbara.

**There were no public comments specifically on Recommendation #6: Consider using Redevelopment Agency funds for capital improvements in the area to mitigate the impact of the shelter.**

**There were no public comments specifically on Recommendation #7: Assist with securing locations and funding for more detox beds and recovery beds for homeless individuals with substance abuse issues.**

**Public comments on Recommendation #8: Continue and expand the Restorative Policing Program to work with homeless persons with mental illness.**

Linda Miller stated that the S.B. Police Department is on the forefront of something good and if they keep working on a humane level they can do more good. She also felt that the Police Department should work with the County Sheriff and Highway Patrol to train them.

**There were no public comments specifically on Recommendation #9: Assist service providers in securing additional funding for relocation funds and emergency hotel vouchers and programs to help reconnect people with their families.**

**Public comments on Recommendation #10: Develop a panhandling and alternate giving campaign in collaboration with the Downtown Organization, the Conference and Visitors Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, the Greater S.B. Lodging and Restaurant Association, homeless service providers, and homeless advocates.**

Steve Hyslop said that he is a member of many of the organizations listed in this recommendation and he is looking forward to working with the subcommittee on these

issues. He also stated that the very aggressive panhandlers are the reason for the request for more police presence.

Mike Foley, Casa Esperanza, said that their street outreach team does not hand out food and he feels that if 100% of the proceeds of an alternative giving program went to street outreach then it would be a very successful campaign.

Peter Marin stated that many communities have outreach teams that give out food. He said that anti-panhandling campaigns take food away from hungry people and a panhandling program will not feed the hungry.

Melody said that there are programs in Santa Barbara that feed the hungry.

Mark Watson, Noah's Anchorage, said the message to the public needs to be one of compassion and care instead of a negative one.

**Public comments on Recommendation #11: Continue looking for opportunities to assist with affordable housing projects, especially those involving permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals.**

Roger Heroux, Bringing Our Community Home, said that the City of Santa Barbara has done its share of affordable housing and he appreciates the projects currently in the pipeline. He said that taking people off the streets with the housing first model is not only successful, but also saves money. He encouraged the City to continue with this effort.

Linda Miller, Homes on Wheels, said that more non-profit agencies need to open up their lots to vehicle dwellers who are responsible.

**See Attachment 1 for public input received via email.**

**5. SUBCOMMITTEE INITIAL RESPONSE TO DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Councilmember Francisco said that he thinks a Recovery Zone as opposed to an Alcohol Impact Area is more practical. He feels that measurability is a good tool and should be incorporated into the recommendations. He said to make sure the panhandling campaign message is compassionate and this may solve the issues some business owners brought up about their reluctance to being perceived as against panhandlers. He feels the message will contribute to a positive outcome.

Councilmember Schneider commented that it was a great first draft framework and she agreed with Councilmember Francisco's remarks regarding the need to review the Recovery Zone in more detail. She would like the City Attorney to look at the letter from the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. She also felt that the subcommittee should make some statement about the Recovery Zone proposal since there was an entire meeting devoted to it. She also agreed with Councilmember Francisco's remarks regarding the need for measured outcomes and good data and that the message for panhandling enforcement must also be compassion-based. She also felt that the educational component should be connected to the Downtown Organization. She stated that there needs to be an overarching statement in the document from the subcommittee on the need for a balanced approach and that the recommendations should be taken as a

package not “a-la-carte” (for example, recommendation #1 regarding the panhandling ordinance should go hand-in-hand with recommendation #10 regarding an alternate giving campaign). Recommendation #6 (use of RDA funds for capital improvements) needs to include an assessment of what could be achieved and a prioritization of that list. She stated that we should also consider using CDBG capital funds through the Neighborhood Improvement Task Force as another source of funding. Recommendation #5 (Casa Esperanza CUP) should state whether or not the subcommittee thinks the CUP should be amended and if so, for how many beds, under what circumstances (populations) and with what other neighborhood mitigation conditions of approval. Her comments regarding recommendation #4 (street outreach) included a suggestion that the street outreach teams and the Police Department meet more often than 2 times per year. She acknowledged the Downtown Organization for their willingness to consider paying for half of the cost of a part-time retired officer and wondered if the City’s financial investment in any of the other recommendations could be used as matching opportunities from the community and/or foundations. She asked for more information about the Coastal Zone Affordable Overnight Accommodation Fund, specifically how much is in it and what it can be used for. She felt that we need to add philanthropic foundations, County and the Courts to the list of partners.

Councilmember Francisco recommended that another group look at the impacts of Casa Esperanza amending their CUP to add more year round beds to determine the neighborhood impacts and what kind of beds.

Councilmember Falcone said that she looks forward to getting more into the specifics on December 18<sup>th</sup> and stated that the City needs others to step up with some of these issues (i.e. coordination of street outreach and police and shelter availability). She feels there may be an issue with disbursing alternate giving campaign funding because there are so many agencies doing outreach so she asked the agencies to come to the subcommittee with recommendations. She also stated that she sees the process as a four pronged approach: 1) enforcement, 2) detox beds, 3) services, including prevention, Casa Esperanza CUP, and 4) housing, including master leasing. With increased enforcement, many will crash and we need services and outreach for them.

## 6. DATE/TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on December 18, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. There will be a final meeting on January 29, 2009 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Both meetings will be held in the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA.

## 7. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

## ATTENDEES

Lee Bethel, S.B. County Probation Department  
Kathy Janega-Dykes, S.B. Conference and Visitor’s Bureau  
Bill Collyer, Santa Barbara Downtown Organization  
Mark Watson, Noah’s Anchorage  
Jack Wilson, Holy Chaos, Pershing Park  
Gert & Margie Walter, Holy Chaos, Pershing Park

Ruth Wilson, Holy Chaos, Pershing Park  
Imelda Loza, Casa Esperanza  
Gary Linker, New Beginnings Counseling Center  
Jennifer Ferraez, S.B. County Alcohol Drug and Mental Health  
John Buttny, Bringing Our Community Home  
John Dixon, Tri-County Produce  
S. Marisol Castillo, Noah's Anchorage  
Tom Thomas, Santa Barbara Bank and Trust  
Roslyn Scheuerman, New Beginnings & WillBridge  
Al Rodriguez, S.B. County Alcohol Drug and Mental Health  
Peter Newhaus, Resident  
Suzanne Riordan, Families Act  
Isabel Blagborne, Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse  
Mike Foley, Casa Esperanza  
Roger Heroux. Bringing Our Community Home  
Peter Marin  
Linda Miller, HOMES on Wheels  
Nancy McCradie, HOMES on Wheels  
Melody  
Steve Hyslop, Greater S.B. Lodging and Restaurant Assoc/Harbor Merchant's Assoc.